

## 170823 SLT E-Bulletin : CASINO UPDATE – OTC Orders an EIS

On Tuesday August 22, the Otter Tail County (OTC) Board of Commissioners met to make a “**Needs Decision**” pertaining to the environmental review for the Star Lake Casino Development project.

The Commission unanimously voted in favor of a “positive **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT** (EIS) decision”. The Star Lake Township (SLT) Board is pleased by this decision as an EIS will provide a more stringent and comprehensive review of the numerous potentially negative environmental and social effects that are associated with the casino development. While SLT has no legal jurisdiction within these proceedings, the board does feel a strong obligation to insure our natural resources and the rights of property owners are protected to the greatest extent possible.

The county will next need to decide the “**Scope**” (i.e. what’s going to be included in the EIS). The first step in this process is to estimate the scoping period costs, as these costs are to be fully paid by the proposer before the scoping period can begin. At the 8/22 meeting OTC instructed their staff to complete this estimate of scoping costs by the 9/5 regular meeting of the OTC Board of Commissioners. Once OTC receives the proposer’s scoping cost payment, and the proposers complete their portion of the EIS, a public meeting will be held to allow for public review/comment.

We have no information as to how long this EIS process may take, or when the public meeting may take place. The SLT Board remains committed to monitoring this situation and keeping you informed of significant developments. To that end, the following link to the InForum is a pretty good synopsis of this recent action by the OTC Commissioners.

InForum: Star Lake casino opponents get a victory, for now  
<http://www.inforum.com/news/4316270-mcfeely-star-lake-casino-opponents-get-victory-now>

Separately from this week’s OTC action, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is still evaluating the proposer’s responses to the 13 environmental issues that they are requiring further information on. This relates to the “Dredge & Fill Permit” that USACE must issue prior to start of construction.

We encourage residents to stay informed and to participate in the EIS process when possible. The Otter Tail County website and that of the Star Lake Concerned Citizen Group remain as good sources of information.

Respectfully, Lee Mindemann – Star Lake Town Board